

# **MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT MEASLES INFORMATION SHEET**

## **What is measles?**

Measles is a rash illness caused by a virus.

## **Who can get measles?**

Persons who have not had measles (mostly people born after 1956) and who have not been given live measles vaccine.

## **What are the symptoms?**

- hard dry cough
- sneezing or runny nose
- watery or red eyes
- fever which rises when the rash appears (101°F or higher)
- rash: red, raised, blotchy (starts on the face and spreads to trunk, arms and legs)
- tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums and roof of the mouth

## **How long after exposure do symptoms first begin?**

Symptoms usually begin 10 days after exposure. The rash usually appears 14 days after exposure.

## **How is it spread?**

Measles is easily spread by droplets from the nose, throat and mouth through sneezing, coughing and speaking. It is more common in late winter and early spring.

## **How long is a person contagious?**

A person can spread measles up to 4 days before and 4 days after the rash appears.

## **Are there complications?**

Yes. Otitis Media (ear infection) or pneumonia can occur as a result of measles. Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) is an uncommon, but serious complication of measles. During pregnancy, measles may cause the loss of the unborn baby.

## **Is there treatment for measles?**

Bed rest at home for at least 4 days after the appearance of the rash.

## **How can measles be prevented?**

Measles can be prevented by vaccination. All healthy children should be vaccinated at 12-15 months of age with measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. A second dose should be administered at 4-6 years of age.